



SUPPORTIVE STATEMENTS FOR SENATOR HEITKAMP'S HELP ENCOURAGE A LIFETIME OF PUBLIC SERVICE (HELPS) ACT

"Farming is public service. Farming is dedicating your life to feeding other people. Farming deserves to be acknowledged as the public service that it is. Young farmers need the nation to back them. Today's introduction of the HELPS Act is an important step in our effort to address the impact student loan debt is having on our agricultural economy. We applaud Senators Heitkamp and Tester for their leadership and we call on all Senators to support this bill." — ***Lindsey Lusher Shute, co-founder and Executive Director of the National Young Farmers Coalition***

"New teachers face many challenges as they start out in a new job and new school, and high amounts of student debt only make that adjustment more difficult and lower morale among young educators. As North Dakota faces a critical teacher shortage across the state, alleviating student debt burdens would encourage additional students interested in teaching to actively serve our public schools and communities. I would like to commend Senator Heitkamp for her due diligence in representing our North Dakota United public employees through the introduction of this comprehensive bill." — ***Karen Askerooth, National Education Association State Director, North Dakota United***

"Over and over, we hear from our tribal college students that the number one challenge they face in pursuing a higher education is financial, even at the most affordable colleges in the country. The same is true for our potential faculty— more often than not, finances prompt them to bypass our rural TCUs for higher paying jobs in urban areas. They have to pay off their student loans. We cannot rebuild Indian Country and strengthen rural America without an educated and trained workforce. That requires people who are committed to doing the educating and training in rural and tribal communities. Through Senator Heitkamp's HELPS Act, more potential teachers, counselors, nurses, and others will be able not just to dream about helping their communities and people— they will actually be able to do it and make it work financially. That has the power to be transformative in Indian Country and rural America. And that is why the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, which includes 38 Tribal Colleges and Universities, including five in North Dakota, strongly supports the HELPS Act and commends Senator Heitkamp for her leadership on this vital issue." — ***Carrie L. Billy, President & CEO, American Indian Higher Education Consortium***

"My heart belongs entirely to the world of non-profits and those that it serves. Luckily for me, it seems that this world feels the same about me, and I will likely be offered a position upon graduating. However, with very high amounts of student loans, I am forced to think about salary

options instead of who needs help the most. It's hard knowing that if I went into private practice in the same position, I could be making tens of thousands more each year with additional repayment options. Too often, instead of supporting those who are trying to help our most vulnerable populations, we underpay them and offer no help in repaying the effort they made to become qualified to do so. Senator Hetikamp's legislation would allow me to serve those most in need while staying in my home state that I love. Our nation must improve its efforts to support our providers— and this is a great first step.” — ***Megan Price, Master of Social Work candidate, University of North Dakota***